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ABSTRACT

This paper overviews the development and present status of the Chicano Studies Department at Metro State College of Denver (MSCD). At its inception during the 1960s, Chicano Studies were viewed as a means of destroying the racist and imperialist mentality toward Chicanos and promoting Chicano power and freedom. Chicano activists' efforts to end educational discrimination and an increasing Chicano student population prompted MSCD to establish a Chicano Studies Department in 1971. During the late 1970s, the influence of the Chicano movement diminished as activists were targeted by government and conservatives. Soon thereafter, the department was reduced to the status of a program with a major and was housed with African American Studies under a newly created Institute of Intercultural Studies. After 1987, more Chicano faculty were hired to staff the increasing number of Chicano courses being taught, and after pressure from faculty and students, the Chicano Studies Department was reestablished in August 1995. However, the department continues to experience resistance from conservative professors, administrators, news reporters, politicians, and the White community, as well as resistance within the Chicano community. Contains 30 endnotes. (LP)

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CHICANO STUDIES AT METRO STATE COLLEGE OF DENVER:
Suggestions for Proactive Strategies

Introduction

As a legitimate scholarly field, Chicano Studies must never forget the crucial social, political, and economic needs of our communities. If Chicano scholarship does not remain focused on the real-life conditions in our neighborhoods, then it runs the risk of losing relevance, legitimacy, and support in our own barrios. In Denver and around the nation, Chicano Studies cannot be isolated in an "ivory tower" and hope to survive the onslaught of attacks bent on destroying everything we have tried to create since the 1960s. If we forget our community base, we do so at our own peril.[1]

This paper attempts to explain why the Chicano Studies Department at Metro State College of Denver won important friends and has struggled to influence its enemies. The discussion of our experience at Metro State follows a chronological order of past history, present conditions, and future expansion. In my humble opinion, our Chicano Studies Department overcame, is overcoming, and will continue to overcome external and internal threats to our existence. Through the ebb and flow of political struggle, Chicanos have synthesized practical and sometimes pragmatic ideas that helped us survive marginalization.

A Personal Perspective on Chicano Studies

"What do we want, and when do we want it?" These questions are simple yet complex. On one level, scholars and political leaders have called for immediate self-determination if not "liberation" and total independence. However, most Chicanos have not shared our vision of Aztlán as "a free union

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of pueblos."[2] In the main, however, the Chicano movement has often accepted a small role in educational, economic, political, and social programs. In the end, activists have taken whatever reforms we have been able to wrestle away from the majority power structure. Some victories have been lasting while many apparent "victories" achieved only tokenism, opportunism, or false "revolutionary" panaceas.

At its inception, Chicano Studies was viewed as only a means to an end. Rightly or wrongly, Chicano Studies became "the" means to achieve an historic counter-hegemonic paradigm shift that would destroy the "racist, sexist, imperialist" mentality and usher an era of unparalleled Chicano power and freedom.[3] But this hegemonic mentality prevails and Chicanos still lack the necessary freedom to determine our own destiny. Carlos Muñoz asserted that it was a strategic error to demand the "mainstreaming" of Chicano Studies as an ultimate goal in itself.[4] At the 1969 Santa Barbara conference, it was only one tactical reform that might achieve some self-determination. The challenge to maintain Chicano programs against staff firings, budget cuts, declining student enrollments, and internal divisions often caused Chicanos to protect the institution and forget why it was started in the first place. Saving the institution became a higher priority than uniting Chicanos on and off campus. In other cases, Chicanos became uncritically "dependent" on such programs in every sense of the word. Ethnic politics slow but do not stop social integration and cultural assimilation in the long term.

In the final analysis, what has Chicano Studies produced after four decades of ferment, development, and maturation? Quantitatively, we can measure significant progress since the 1960s. Among undergraduate colleges

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in the United States, there exist 101 Chicano/Mexican American/Hispanic Studies programs offering bachelor degrees in the major (Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges, (1995). Furthermore, before 1969, fewer than 100 Chicanos had earned doctoral degrees. One unscientific study identified 396 "Chicano-focused" Ph.D. dissertations written between 1980 and 1987 but this data did not identify how many doctorates were awarded to Chicanos.[5] It is anyone's guess how many Chicano students may have gotten undergraduate degrees over time. Clearly, the our community has received some relative, quantitative benefits from affirmative action programs albeit through the personal sacrifice of hardworking families and activists despite the obstacles imposed by reactionary opponents. Qualitatively, it is questionable whether Chicano Studies achieved any measure of self-determination. Almost wishfully, John R. Chavez wrote in his book, The Lost Land, that Chicano Studies produced "...the first group of Chicano college graduates committed to the cultural survival of their people." Given demographics, Chicanos must strive for more than mere survival if we ever hope to control our own destiny.

Certainly, Chicano Studies and other multicultural, pluralistic, and ethnic studies curriculum programs are considered a threat to the dominant paradigm. Thusly, we experience protracted resistance from conservative professors, administrators, news reporters, politicians, and the Anglo community, in general. Recently, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., a paragon liberal-turned-conservative, has written that, "Nor, despite the effort of ethnic ideologues, are minority groups all that hermetically sealed off from each other, except in special situations, like colleges, where ideologues are authority figures."[6] It surprises nobody that Chicano Studies has met stiff resistance despite its survival into four decades.[7]

What continues to surprise and frustrate Chicano activists and scholars is the resistance we confront in our own community.[8] Much of the problem lays in the movement's attempt to impose a monolithic Chicano ideology on a diverse community that has divergent cultural identities and socio-economic priorities.[9] It must also be admitted that Chicano Studies programs have not implemented one scholarly standard and dedicated activism does not exist everywhere. In fact, some programs have been compromised and abolished due to our own ignorance of fraud, hidden agendas, and personality conflicts. We cannot lead our community or the academy if our own house is not in order. In a practical way, Chicanos have succeeded when freedom of debate prevailed over rigid, narrow conformity without negating political imperatives like ideological consistency, discipline, and ethical responsibility.

On a national level, our communities face complex problems that demand rigorous investigation and clearly articulated, practical solutions which unite rather than divide people. Chicanos must be inclusive, not exclusive. The Plan de Santa Barbara specified the need to form coalitions and alliances based on principles of mutual benefit, respect, and common humanity. Despite demographic trends, we never exercised enough power to force our agenda nor should we if we ever attain such power. We often need the help of people outside our community but El Plan also warned against alliances that coopt our energy; however, we must build genuine trust and cooperation. We cannot "demonize" people who generally think or look differently and expect them to help us in time of need. If we really want to improve the quality of life for the entire Chicano community, then we must go beyond the rhetoric of self-determination and liberation for ourselves only. In an imperfect world, we must be guided by freedom, justice, tolerance, respect, and a keen

sense fairness to all. If we learned in the 1960s that fear and violence beget fear and violence, then perhaps we can learn to agree to disagree.

Chicanos and Metro State College of Denver (MSCD)

Like other schools around the nation, MSCD has had a turbulent experience establishing and maintaining a Chicano Studies curriculum over the years. As part of the State Colleges of Colorado, MSCD was founded in 1963 as an innovative, nonresidenential urban college. Initially, MSCD was housed in temporary facilities downtown while it served the needs of a diverse student population. But planners sought a lasting home for the school.

It was the Chicano community on the Westside of Denver known as Auraria which paid the price to provide a permanent site for Metro State. The State of Colorado created an agency named the Auraria Higher Education Center Board (AHEC) in the late 1960s which planned to replace longtime Chicano residents with facilities to house three schools on one location: Metro, the University of Colorado, and the Community College of Denver. Paternalistically, the Board used its power to condemn properties for urban renewal whether Chicanos living in Auraria wanted to leave or not. By 1974, the Auraria Board had prevailed in displacing the community residents but not without a fight.

The Chicano community rallied in opposition to the cavalier attitude of AHEC officials. The residents formed their own group to lobby against evictions and, to the end, they even threatened to erect a "tent city" to protest their removal despite "funds for relocation." One resident named Martha Gonzalez-Alcaro admitted that, "While we knew it was for a good cause, most of the residents of the neighborhood have ended up with bitter feelings that they didn't get the proper amount of money for their homes."[10] As if

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the destruction of a Chicano neighborhood was not enough, AHEC perpetrated a deception to remove the last remnants of popular protest. It was verbally agreed, according to resident Ellen Torres, that, "They (Aurarians) would be able to get their education there at the campus. That's still something that's argued and that never came about."[11] Though no written agreement was formalized, Displaced Aurarians got 40 scholarships this year from Metro while AHEC and the University of Colorado Denver provide absolutely nothing. The relationship between old Westsiders and the campuses has not warmed over the years.

Some Chicanos have euphemistically called Denver "the Heart of Aztlán" because of the Crusade for Justice and its founder, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales. In the early 1960s, Corky and the Crusade inspired Chicanos across the nation to end discrimination in education and other areas of daily life. In 1968, Gonzales participated in the Poor People's March on Washington D.C. where he delivered a powerful statement known as "We Demand." In reference to Chicano education, he said that, "We demand a completely free education from kindergarten to college...this in compensation for decades of poor education given our raza." Likewise, he added that, "the textbooks be rewritten to emphasize the heritage and contributions of the Mexican-Americans in the building of the Southwest."[12] For years afterward, Corky Gonzales advised Chicano youth to demand educational justice in Denver and throughout the American Southwest.

Meanwhile, the increasing Chicano student population held Metro State College and other Colorado schools accountable for providing an education relevant to community needs. Student organizations like the United Mexican American Students (UMAS) and later the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de

Aztlán (MECHA) pressed college administrators and trustees to create Chicano Studies in higher education. Here as elsewhere, the implementation process was slow, incremental, and fraught with political expediency. By the late 1960s, the MSCD administrators allowed a few cultural courses which later grew into a Chicano Studies program. Gradually, by at least 1971, a corps of qualified scholars were assembled to professionalize the curriculum and the trustees eventually approved the establishment of a Chicano Studies Department. By the 1980s, a partial list of scholars who taught at Metro included Dr. Irene Blea, Dr. David Sandoval, Dr. David Conde, Dr. Eutimio Topete, Ms. Virginia Castro, Mr. Everet Chavez, and Dr. Antonio Esquivel but only two still teach today. To further promote the visibility of Chicano faculty at Metro, the president appointed Drs. Conde and Esquivel to administrative positions. Chicano influence at MSCD appeared to be expanding but problems loomed in the distance.

Many recall that the Chicano movement's strength withered significantly after the mid-1970s. Professors Rudy Acuña and Carlos Muñoz acknowledged the national decline and provided explanations why Denver militancy then sputtered.[13] Internal splintering and external opposition spoke volumes why the movement lost its initial enthusiasm, but the impact of the era's "White Backlash" has never been fully credited. Denver was no different than other regions of the country. The militancy of the Crusade for Justice and their UMAS/MECHA supporters had made them targets of an F.B.I. and Denver Police Department campaign of infiltration, disruption, and murder. These CONINTELPRO activities, the covert arm of the "White Backlash," against Denver area Chicanos was thoroughly documented in an unpublished manuscript written by former Crusade member Ernesto Vigil.[14] Many activists who spoke against

injustices and demanded equal access to social services including Chicano Studies was condemned by conservative politicians, the media, and community leaders as violent "rabble rousers" with strong communist sympathies. It was no wonder that Chicano activism retreated under the withering attack launched by authorities. As long as Chicanos were vigilant and organized, administrators were reluctant to reduce or eliminate poverty programs acting as mechanisms for social control. And Chicano Studies has never been an exception to this rule.

Militants were never popular with mainstream writers and scholars yet some have prematurely relished in our reported demise. For example, Professor Walker Connor of Trinity College wrote that, "the Chicano movement's star, which never shined very brightly, soon went into eclipse.... In sum, appeals to an Indian heritage failed to elicit broad support."[15] Connor and others from the Urban Institute predicted an integrationist golden age for Mexican Americans where it not for two flies in the ointment: Chicanos and Mexican immigrants. I have always said that it is better to be right than popular!

During the 1980s, Metro administrators sensed that the time was right to eliminate the Chicano Studies Department. In their eyes, the department was expensive, unproductive, and administrators were embarrassed to justify its existence to conservatives on the Board of Trustess and the Legislature. In 1985, the department was reduced to the status of a program with a major and it was housed with African American Studies under the umbrella of the newly created Institute of Intercultural Studies. Thusly, Chicano Studies was relegated to insignificance under the supervision of a well-meaning but non-Chicano professor named Dr. Akbarali Thobhani.

The Chicano staff teaching at Metro then included Irene Blea and Eutimio Topete who were both joint-appointments between Chicano Studies and the departments of Sociology and Education, respectively. Also, David Conde taught one course per term usually as an unpaid overload. By 1987, Dr. Topete quit Metro, his position was not refilled, and enrollments began declining from 234 credit hours in Fall 1986 down to 162 credit hours by Spring 1988. Chicano morale at MSCD reached its lowest ebb when Drs. Conde and Esquivel were removed from administration.

Conde, Esquivel, Blea, and other part time faculty reversed the downward trend in enrollment with 309 credit hours in Fall 1988 rising to 435 credit hours in Fall 1990.[16] However, Irene Blea left Metro at the end of the semester and Dr. Thobhani initiated a search to replace her in the program. In Fall 1991, Dr. Aileen Lucero was hired jointly with Sociology and began teaching Chicano Studies half-time. Dr. Thobhani recruited two more Chicanas, Rosalia Solarzano and Canela Jaramillo, who did not work out due to failure completing the dissertation and philosophical problems with Chicana students, respectively. However, Drs. Angelina de la Torre, and Lupe Martinez as well as excellent part timers like Abelardo Delgado, Ramon del Castillo, and Nita Gonzales added their talents to the Chicano Studies offerings.

MSCD's Multicultural Graduation Requirement

Since November 11, 1987, Metro has required that all students complete any officially designated 3-hour multicultural course or its transferable equivalent prior to graduation. In Denver as elsewhere, "ethnic awareness" courses are controversial from virtually anyone's perspective; from an ethnic American standpoint, one 3-hour course is not enough, however, from the White

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American view, even one course is considered an intrusive abridgement of fundamental consitutional rights of free choice. When it comes to issues of sociological race or ethnic culture, Americans of every hue are extremely sensitive and increasingly so as the debate becomes more politicized.

At MSCD, the multicultural requirement has been a blessing to some and a bane to others. Chicano Studies and others have benefited directly from the mandate; for example, more Chicano faculty were hired (myself included) to teach more classes to more students including a growing number who major or minor in this field. In particular, Chicano Studies credit hour production has increased 168.6% from 669 hours to 1,797 hours per year between 1990 and 1995.[17] In fact, Chicano Studies enrollment had the greatest relative increase of all programs/departments at Metro due in part to 5 multicultural courses that we crosslist with other departments. Since being hired in Spring 1993, I have taught between one and three Chicano Studies courses per semester though my appointment is with the History department. Likewise, Dr. Arturo Campa Jr., a noted sociologist, was hired Fall 1993 and he also teaches a few Chicano courses each term.

But the multicultural requirement also caused resentment in some circles. Beyond the usual assortment of students who regret taking any graduation requirement, Chicano Studies and other multicultural programs have become the focus of strident complaints and verbal attacks from faculty and student biggots, jealous departments, and reactionary journalists in the local press. In the last five years, the most organized attacks against multiculturalism as currently defined at Metro has come from the small group of burned-out "angry whitemen" in the faculty and the College Republicans.

The Faculty Senate has debated the issue twice since 1991 and each time the body and executive council approved alternate definitions which it posed to replace the current official multicultural requirement. Some senators assumed that multicultural courses were too narrowly defined, conceptually flawed, inherently "white-bashing," and poorly assessed. These faculty then asserted that all curriculum decisions resided traditionally with the Senate. On both occasions, the faculty of color and some allies suffered through highly charged debates and were defeated by the majority. In prinicple, the majority had no coherent agreement among themselves except their comman opposition to the current definition. Had the faculty of color lobbied more effectively among progressive members or consolidated members of the School of Letters, Arts, and Sciences (SCOLAS) the outcome may have been different. The SCOLAS is the largest of Metro's three schools and 84 % of multicultural courses are taught in this school.

Clearly, a philosophical disagreement exists between the constituencies on both sides of the issue. The conflict is apparent when the two Senate definitions are compared to the official definition. On September 18, 1991, the Senate approved the following:

> Multicultural education experiences or offerings examine the interactions of values and beliefs, traditions, identities, and contributions of the following groups: cultural and ethnic minorities in the U.S.; and, groups characterized by gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

However, on November 5, 1991, Provost David Williams, an African American administrator sympathetic to the minority opinion, decided that:

> Multicultural educational experiences or offerings examine the interactions of values and beliefs, traditions, identities, and contributions of cultural and ethnic minorities in the U.S.: Native American, African American, Hispanic American, and Asian American; which may include groups within these minorities characterized by gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

In response to a floor motion, on December 6, 1993, the President's Council of the Senate "recommended" that Provost Williams accept a revised definition that integrated and expanded the first two definitions. The Senate's ploy was a thinly veiled attempt to negate Williams' authority over faculty wishes. Senate President Jerry Boswell sent the Provost the following:

> Multicultural educational experiences or offerings examine the interactions of values and beliefs, traditions, identities, socio-economic status, and contributions of the following: U.S. cultural and ethnic groups: Native American, African American, Hispanic American, and Asian American; groups characterized by gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability; international cultural and ethnic group issues concerning, but not restricted to increasing awareness of multinationalism and human rights.

Boswell ended his letter claiming the Senate's new definition satisfied all interests and provided an "effective basis" for developing multicultural curriculum.[18] Since Metro was again changing presidential administration, Provost Williams planned to accept other employment anyway so he decided to leave the official definition unchanged leaving the decision to his successor (according to public announcements). Regardless of his personal motives, the Faculty of Color Forum pressured Williams to leave the multicultural definition just the way it was believing that the status quo was preferrable to the Senate's version. And Williams' definition remains Metro's official requirement yet dissident faculty continue struggling to overturn it for various reasons. The woeful pettiness of some senators has been bothersome but their methods are tolerable compared to blatent hysteria and hate-mongering engineered by one student.

In 1995, an egotistical officer of the College Republicans named John Morris raised the ante by accusing multicultural faculty of "white-bashing," racism, and repression. Morris has used every possible opportunity to insult, threaten, and impede Chicano and other multicultural courses using methods

that would make Patrick Buchanan proud. He has filed one legal suit against Metro over its sexual orientation non-discrimination policy. Last June, Morris sent the Faculty Senate an ultimatum that he would sue the college and every senator who failed to approve "German Culture" as an alternative multicultural course (the course was not approved and we were not sued).

Since Fall 1995, Morris has focused on labeling Professors Conde, Macarenas, and White "racist liars" who should be fired for what they say in multicultural classes. In typical McCarthy style, he claimed that over 1,000 students signed his petition demanding that the three "racist" professors be fired; however, he has never produced said petition for public scrutiny. He has covered bulletin boards with illegal posters entitled, "End Racism on Campus!," "Multicultural Requirement Should be Open to All Cultures!," and "Bombs, Violence, and Multiculturalism."[19] Often, he threatens staff and students who remove his illegal posters and officials cannot/will not stop him from expressing his "freedom of speech." He also has a Spanish-surnamed female cohort named "Michelle Urrutia" who writes letters to campus newspapers. Even the College Republicans have tired of Morris' antics and expelled him from the group.

As a member of the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee, I have observed "Freedom Fighter" Morris effectively manipulating senior faculty with his unfounded accusations about multiculturalism. While Morris attended four of our "public" meetings influencing the committee to approve his "German Culture" agenda, legitimate means were used to "silence" him in meetings and prevent committee members from inadvertently helping this fool. His constant ravings have isolated this extremist for the time being.

Metro's multicultural controversy will not disappear in the near future and proactive tactics and strategies can be used to neutralize opponents among the students and the faculty. However, we should not use the same heavy-handed, coersive methods used by fanatics or naive followers. It was in this context that I became a member of the "infamous Seattle Six" who had the audacity to propose expanding the multicultural definition into something we called an "American Pluralism" graduation requirement.[20] The Seattle conferees thought it advisable to remove the issue from the control and corrosive influence of mindless ideologues thereby creating a campus alliance strong enough to withstand any reactionary opposition to our basic multiculturalism. Apparently, the "Seattle Six" proposal was premature and ill-advised judging from the reception it got from the new Chair of the Chicano Studies Department, Dr. Luis Torres, when it became public.[21]

However, the college president and provost were quick to "control the damage" caused by the misguided manner in which the novel American Pluralism proposal was distributed. Across campus, Chicano faculty, staff, students and allies immediately rallied to protect existing multicultural initiatives from potential disruption or dilution threatening curriculum, enrollment, or program funding. Responding to Dr. Torres' proactive and assertive letter, MSCD President Sheila Kaplan repeated that her goal, "...is to build, under your leadership, a Chicano Studies program of recognizable quality."[22] She reiterated the above pledge verbally during a February 28, 1996 meeting with the faculty of the Chicano Studies Department as she hoped to allay fears. The president's assurance may briefly calm Chicano anxiety. However, given Metro's history establishing, disestablishing, and reestablishing, and maybe redisestablishing the Chicano Studies Department, we delude ourselves by

thinking that the current supportive climate will last forever. It bears repeating that, "Overall, however, it is clear that the position of Chicano Studies programs is tenuous."[22] The old adage of, "Plan for the worst, expect the best and you'll never be surprised!," holds special meaning here.

As mentioned earlier, Metro's first Chicano Studies Department was reduced to a program within a larger institute in 1985. But the community was not happy with that outcome and events reversed the department's dissolution. Various community elements called the restoration of department status yet Metro's administration refused. Over the years, the Chicano community has intervened more than once to prevent campus decision-makers from eliminating programs like the Office of Community Outreach. Likewise, MSCD's own Chicano Community Task Force urged the president to upgrade Chicano Studies as early as 1992.[24] A year later, external consultant Dr. Eliu Carranza and Metro's Program Review Committee suggestion major revisions to professionalize the Chicano curriculum but few recommendations were implemented.

On September 16, 1993, MECHA members demanded that newly-appointed college president, Dr. Sheila Kaplan, reestablish a Chicano Studies department on campus. Chicano students got no concrete response. But, Kaplan's attitude changed after mechista Arturo "Popos" Rodriguez published an embarrassing exposé that pointed out many shortcomings in Metro's program. On Cinco de Mayo, 1994, President Kaplan was presented with a "MECHA List of Demands"[25] that stressed their frustration with "false promises" and "red-tape" achieving reestablishment of the department and creation of a Chicano community center. Responding to the non-negotiable demands, Kaplan ordered an investigation into every charge made by MECHA. By May 6, 1994, the president had reports from Dr. Thobhani, Dr. Esquibel, and Canela Jaramillo, an instructor severely

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criticized by the students.[26] All Chicano Studies faculty addressed the valid student concerns but the president still controlled the purse stings.

During the Summer, the Chicano Studies faculty preoccupied themselves correcting many program inadequacies noted by the students. The faculty voted unanimously in support of a restored Chicano Studies department but gave only qualified endorsement to MECHA's demand for their own community center. Further, timelines to start the department were developed as well as staff needs, budgets, course proposal, and faculty search committees.

Despite criticism, the maligned faculty did their duty and worked with students until newly-hired chair Dr. Luis Torres, assumed control in August, 1995. Surprisingly, reestablishing Chicano Studies to department status has been easier than one might think yet major problems over faculty staffing, budgets, new curriculum proposals, and unresolved political questions remain. However, Dr. Torres' assertive agenda has earned him respect from Chicanos on and off campus. Though much work lays ahead, Luis Torres has inspired unity and confidence among Metro Chicanos that the department will expand into many new exciting directions. In one year, Chicano Studies has already gained 14 new students who declared minors in the program. Thustar, Torres' leadership has lived-up to our expectations. Yet Chicanos approach another century living in the United States hopeful that the next millenium bodes well for the generations that will follow us on Earth.

Conclusion

Historians have no crystal ball to predict the future; however, change and continuity obviously await. In the present political climate, there is plenty of space for both pessimism and optimism. After twenty-eight years

in the Chicano movement, I have learned to accept the best and the worst that life can dish out. The Chicano movement began during the Democrat's War on Poverty and Vietnam; we survived twenty years of Nixon-Reagan policies; and, we now bask in the benign neglect of spineless Dixiecrats who cave in on vital social issues like pluralism and affirmative action. Our challenge is work for a new human paradigm that will allow a Chicano paradigm to exist. To my thinking, this quest is optimistic compared to plethora of dispairing, depressing, and pessimistic senarios that abound.

In the first place, we know who will not support our vision based on past experience and current debates. Defensively, archconservatives across the nation promote laws specifically meant to reduce or control our social, political, and economic existence in this country. Zenophobic laws like Proposition 187 and English-Only attack our culture everywhere and initiatives ending affirmative action destroy our dreams of a better life. Mainstream Americans fear our legitimate presence in this society and lash-out against the perceived threat that we represent. Journalist Linda Seebach and other chauvinists wrap themselves in the U.S. Constitution and distort the truth when they say, "Diversity has come to be a code word for racial preferences."

We should be concerned when all Republican candidates proposed abolishing the U.S. Department of Education. Extremists again wrapped in concepts of freedom and tolerance like the National Association of Scholars (NAS) claim that, "It is only through reform of higher education that we can be sure future generations don't graduate with degrees signifying nothing more than indoctrination in political correctness, multiculturalism, and diversity." I guess this is their version of freedom and tolerance or is that an inversion of reality. In 1992, Patrick Buchanan declared the existence of a "Culture

War" and now we see his ideas bearing such fruit.[27]

The conservative right-wing says they are losing control of the America they once knew, is that true?

Oddly enough, major figures in Chicano Studies and our natural allies on the left of the political spectrum share the fearful pessimism of the right. Is it possible that the rightists have as much reason to fear us as we have to fear them (in both the real and ideal world)? We know they have "all" the power yet they claim we have it; well who does have it? Since at least 1968, I have believed enough "conspiracy theories" that evaporated into thin air upon closer observation. Are we measured in accordance with our enemies? I hope not because I still do not think Nixon and Reagan were worth all the protests, hatred, and martyrs we heaped on those pathetic clowns. But we must defend ourselves against the reactionaries! And sometimes we were more successful when we let them hang themselves! How many of us have realized the tragic irony in Azuela's **The Underdogs**, when crazy Valderrama claimed, "I love the volcano because it's a volcano, the revolution because it's the revolution!" Put another way, the YIPPIES demanded, "Revolution for the hell of it!"

There on the desk is a copy of Voz Fronteriza XX:2 (March 1995) from my alma mater, good old Lumumba-Zapata College (AKA: Marshall College, UCSD). There on the front page is another of my favorite enemies with the crosshairs of a telescopic sight on his face. The captions read: "Wanted: Pete Wilson Raza Enemy # 1." Horale vatos, get a life! And La Prensa has headlines declaring that, "Prop 187 Summit Draws Latino Activists from Across the Country." There are pictures of Tijerina, Gutierrez, Navarro, and cola de baca. It's good to see that somethings just never change, but sure am glad

I'm gone from that chicken outfit. Last but not least, surely Rudy Acuña's classic book, Occupied America, (chicano bible) can shed a ray hope in this pessimistic darkness. The Father of Chicano history ended his book saying that,

> It would be a disservice to portray the future in idealistic terms. Hope is important, but the falsification of reality can immoblize a community. The future's challenge is to preserve Chicano communities, to prevent the defection of the middle class, since it is vital in advocating community interests, to widen progressive, counterhegemonic ideology within the community, and to plan the class struggle that is inevitable.....

Yes hope is important and reality can be harsh and cruel but we will not survive without a practical, concrete dream, paradigm, or plan. In theory, the negation of the negation yields something positive for the alienated (- x - = +), practical optimism bolsters people to sacrifice and endure for winning a clear goal while social enthropy offers no hope at all.

Sadly, the point is that American politics usually reduces itself to simplistic dichotomous oppositions that are seldom resolved peacefully or reasonably. Regardless of fashionable definitions, defenders and proponents of Chicano Studies, ethnic studies, multiculturalism, or diversity programs resort to counterhegemonic discourse that is alien to the masses they seek to liberate. Similar to Acuña's discourse, Evelyn Hu-DeHart preaches to the choir, but not to opponents, when she says that, "Unfortunately, the very success of ethnic studies appears to have prompted a backlash."[28] She might be stating the obvious that we are winning the Culture War on campus but losing it on Main Street.

These institutionalized curriculum programs are reforms at best not blueprints for thorough social change. We should get real if we think otherwise because then we only play with revolution and the lives of people

who follow our lead. Is Chicano Studies or any other curriculum worth martyrdom and killing? I hope not! Are we teaching that "freedom comes from the barrel of a gun," or from ideas on book pages? The latter course is preferable to the former. I will live for my kids and my raza. I refuse to humiliate, flunk, or hurt a student or anyone simply because they disagree with the significance I attached to the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. An adage claims that, "You have not convinced a person because you have silenced them."

A proactive, optimistic multicultural paradigm that includes Chicanismo cannot assert exclusiveness as the right and left extremes have belatedly discovered. Unite where we can then pursue the middle ground or abandon it to eurocentrists. Chicano Studies redefines self-identity, citizenship, and career options for students as different from the mainstream but we should go beyond this level. (Chicano Studies = multiculturalism = A+B+C=A+B+C) On November 3, 1995, at the American Association of Colleges and Universities conference held in Seattle, Dr. Adrienne Chan described how Canadian faculty are required to learn teaching skills, to prepare curriculum, and how to write lesson plans geared to assessing multicultural learning objectives. She reviewed four models of multicultural education. First, compensatory education where marginalized students get remedial instruction. Second, enrichment education provides multicultural courses for all students. Third, enhancement education teaches critical thinking to faculty, staff, and students. Forth, empowerment equalizes power alignments in society. In the end, multiculturalism like Chicano Studies is only a model of social and intergroup relations. If training in culture and tolerance are combined, then all Americans may benefit. In his book, Loose Cannons, Henry Louis

Gates said, "And cultural tolerance comes to nothing without cultural understanding. In short, the challenge facing America in the next century will be the shaping, at long last, of a truly common public culture, one responsive to the long-silenced cultures of color. If we relinquish the ideal of America as a plural nation, we've abandoned the very experiment that America represents."[29] These ideas suggest a new strategy of synthesis that is inclusive not right, center, or left, it represents a non-dichotomous opposition that breeds cooperation and not conflict between cultures. Idealistic maybe, but practical.

In conclusion, when individual members of our community are asked to identify themselves, different identities and interests surface. Whether Mexican born or seventh-generation U.S. citizen, we may choose from many identities like Hispano, Chicano, Mexicano, Latino, Mexican American, American of Mexican descent, Mexican, Spanish, and maybe others. Regardless which we choose, our common dreams, needs, and history must unite us and inspire us. Assuming that this community is extremely diverse, Peter Skerry described why Mexican Americans are different from other American ethnic groups. He said that,

> In sum, we have succeeded in incorporating Mexican Americans into our interest group regime. But this is no ordinary interest group. Not only do its 'members' share only vaguely defined interests that lack any solid organizational basis, but its competitive edge is based on a presumed moral trump: the group's claim as a victimized racial minority. Mexican-American politics is therefore a curious hybrid of self-interest and self-righteousness.[30]

We all recognize our community's cultural, social, economic, political, medical needs in general while this paper concerns our educational needs in particular. Educational improvements are imperative if our youth are to achieve intellectual freedom. Finally, Chicano Studies may achieve its

greatest significance as a "cultural event" rather than as a revolution of cultural self-determination. Maybe scholarship can free students to realize their own destiny and teach them to become the masters of their fate.

ENDNOTES

[1]José Cuellar, "Social Science Research in the U.S. Mexican Community," Aztlán 12:1 (Spring 1981), p. 2. See: Chicano Council for Higher Education, El Plan de Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara: La Causa Publications, 1969); or, "El Plan de Santa Barbara," in, Carlos Muñoz, Youth, Identity, Power (London: Verso, 1989), p. 191 ff.

[2]Alurista, "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán," in, Rudolfo A. Anaya and Francisco Lomelí, eds., Aztlán: Essays on the Chicano Homeland (Albuquerque: Uni. of New Mexico Press, 1989), p. 1.

[3]Carlos Muñoz, "Toward a Chicano Perspective of Political Analysis," Aztlán (Fall 1970), pp. 23-24. Juan Gomez-Quiñones, "Toward a Concept of Culture," in, Joseph Sommers and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, eds., Modern Chicano Writers (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1979), p. 66. Irene I. Blea, Toward a Chicano Social Science (New York: Praeger, 1988), pp. 149-150. Angie Chabram, "Conceptualizing Chicano Critical Discourse," in, Héctor Calderón and José David Saldívar, eds., Criticism in the Borderlands (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 147. See: John R. Chavez, The Lost Land (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), pp. 147-148

[4]Carlos Muñoz, Youth, Identity, Power (London: Verso, 1989), p. 166.

[5]Gary D. Keller, et.al., eds., Curriculum Resources in Chicano Studies (Tempe: Bilingual Press, 1989), p. 10.

[6]Arthur Schlesinger Jr., The Disuniting of America (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), p. 133. See: Avelardo Valdez, "Selective Determinants in Maintaining Social Movement Organizations," Editors, Critica: A Journal of Critical Essays I:2 (Spring 1985), pp. 47-48. In a direct critique of Schlesinger's cynical dismissal of Chicano activist-scholars, Peter Skerry replied that, "So successful have been Mexican-American leaders in enforcing the racial minority perspective, 'Hispanic' has virtually ceased to be an ethno-cultural designation." Peter Skerry, Mexican Americans (New York: The Free Press, 1993), pp. 369-370.

[7]Paul Craig Roberts,"Demonization of White Males," Rocky Mountain News, March 17, 1996, p. 47A. See: Carlos Manuel Haro, "Chicanos and Higher Education," Aztlán 14:1 (Spring 1983), pp. 69-70.

[8]Congressman Henry Gonzales, "Reverse Racism," in, Luis Valdez and Stan Steiner, eds., Aztlan: An Anthology of Mexican American Literature (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), p. 316. Richard Rodriquez, "The New American Scholarship Boy," in, Livie Isauro Duran and H. Russell Bernard, eds., Introduction to Chicano Studies (New York: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 369-374. See: John R. Chavez, Op. Cit., pp. 148-149. In Denver, my Hispano cousin Joseph C'de Baca criticized Chicano activists but he concluded saying, "Let's agree to disagree respectfully!" See: Joseph C'de Baca, "Here's My Response to Chicano Critics," La Voz, August 2, 1995. But, Ernesto

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Vigil replied directly to C'de Baca by defending Metro instructor Ramon del Castillo, MECHA, and other activists yet he concluded respectfully saying that, "I do not have a personal dislike for you, but there are many things I greatly disagree with in your column." Ernesto Vigil letter to Joseph C'de Baca, August 5, 1995.

[9]Antonio Rios Bustamante, Mexicans in the United States and The National Question (Santa Barbara: Editorial La Causa, 1978), pp. 21-22. George J. Sanchez, Becoming Mexican American (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 8 ff. James Diego Vigil, From Indians to Chicanos(Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1984), p. 231. S. Dale McLemore and Ricardo Romo, "The Origins and Development of the Mexican American People," in, Rodolfo O. de la Garza, et.al., eds., The Mexican American Experience (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), p. 27.

[10]Magdalena Gallegos, ed., Auraria Remembered (Denver: Community College of Denver, 1991), p. 5. See: Jane Raley, "A Model for Children: Ninth Street Park's History Remembered as Former Resident Turns 100," The Metropolitan, March 4, 1994.

[11]Ibid., p. 60.

[12]Luis Valdez and Stan Steiner, Op. Cit., p. 219.

[13]Rodolfo Acuña, Occupied America (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p. 392. Carlos Muñoz, Op. Cit., p. 165.

[14]Ernesto Vigil, The Crusade for Justice (Unpublished manuscript), p. 50.

[15]Walker Connor, ed., Mexican-Americans in Comparative Perspective (Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 1985), p. 27.

[16]Dr. Akbarali Thobhani letter to President Sheila Kaplan, May 3, 1994.

[17]Metropolitan State College, Office of Instutitional Research, "Official Credit Hour Production," February 25, 1996.

[18]Dr. Jerry Boswell letter to Provost David Williams, December 6, 1993.

[19]John Morris, "Professor Mascarenas Shouldn't Teach Racial Hate," The Metropolitan, October 6, 1995. Jesse Stephenson, "Student Distributes Flyer Attacking Teacher," The Metropolitan, October 6, 1995. See: Sheila Kaplan e-mail to College Community, December 7, 1994. She wrote, "In response to the blatantly racist, anti-Mexican flyer that was distributed on the Auraria Campus last week." Given 1st Amendment protections, MSCD took limited steps to prevent future flyer distributions and she promised "institutional sanctions" if Auraria students were involved. While libel and slander laws may apply to Morris' words and deeds toward faculty, MSCD administration has taken no steps limiting John Morris.

[20]Dr. Jett Connor letter to MSCD Curriculum Committees and Diversity Task Force, December 8, 1995.

[21]Dr. Luis Torres letter to President Sheila Kaplan, February 13, 1996. See: Carlos Muñoz, Op. Cit., p. 162; where the author wrote that, "...programs were pressured to redefine their objectives in terms of 'American Multi-Cultural Studies'--an objective that deemphasizes Chicano content in favor of comparative ethnic approaches deemed more legitimate by the university."

[22]President Sheila Kaplan letter to Dr. Luis Torres, February 19, 1996.

[23]Carlos Muñoz, Op. Cit., p. 164.

[24]Dr. Antonio Esquibel letter to President Sheila Kaplan, May 3, 1994.

[25]Arturo Rodriguez Jr., "Put 'Studies' Back Into Chicano Studies" El Seminario April 21, 1994. "MECHA List of Demands," May 5, 1994.

[26]Dr. Akbarali Thobhani letter to President Sheila Kaplan, May 3, 1994. Canela Jaramillo letter to Chicano Studies Faculty, May 6, 1994.

[27]Melita Marie Garza, "Culture War," The Denver Post, August 16, 1995. Garza quoted Dr. Ron Takaki as saying that, "'Where it counts, on the nation's campuses, the culture war is being won.'"

[28]Evelyn Hu-DeHart, "The Undermining of Ethnic Studies," The Chronicle of Higher Education, October 20, 1995.

[29]Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Loose Canons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 176.

[30]Peter Skerry, Mexican Americans: The Ambivalent Minority (New York: The Free Press, 1993), p. 376.

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